District Level Committees on TV content

573. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the District Level Committees have been set up for receiving public complaints on TV content, reporting any risk to public order to State and Central Governments, monitoring content of local channels, and reviewing the action taken for enforcing the Cable Act;

(b) if so, whether the District Level Committees possess expertise and have mechanism to undertake the above functions; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that subjectivity at local level may not vitiate this objective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) As per Section 2(a) of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, the District Magistrate or a Sub-Divisional Magistrate or a Commissioner of Police has been designated as "authorised officer' within his local limits of jurisdiction. Order for constitution of Monitoring Committee for Private Television Channels at the State and District level have been issued to enforce the provisions of the Act and Rules framed thereunder.

(b) and (c) In order to provide wider expertise, detailed guidelines have been issued including academicians, psychologists and sociologists in the District/State level Committees so as to obviate any subjectivity. These orders are available on the website of the Ministry *www.mib.nic.in* under the heading "Code & Guidelines", sub-head "Monitoring Committee for Private Television Channels".

TV channels offered by broadcasters

†574.SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the general consumers have become solely dependent on the broadcasters in the present system of TV telecasting;

(b) if not, the Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is also a fact that now only these channels are telecasted on TV which the broadcasters decide;

(d) if so, whether general consumers are not forced to watch those channels being confined to the above broadcasters;

(e) if so, the Government's reaction thereto; and

(f) the measures that would be taken by Government in order to bail out the general consumers from this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) to (f) No such study has been brought to the notice of the Government. The

content of a Television Channel is decided upon by the broadcasters who presumably take the choice of the majority of viewers into account. Government does not interfere in selection of content broadcast by the Television channels. However, the broadcasters are obliged to abide by the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Rules framed thereunder. The consumers have a wide choice of channels and the Govt. has taken steps to formulate policies to give encouragement to diverse regional and linguistic channels which can be distributed on a variety of platforms like Cable, Direct to Home, Internet Protocol Television etc.

Violation of TRAI guidelines on Bouquet price

575. SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAIs) formula for pricing contents on DTH platform entails that all pay channel broadcasters should charge DTH operators only up to 50 per cent of the bouquet price they charge to cable operators in non-CAS area;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that majority of pay channel broadcasters are charging between 55 per cent -115 per cent more from DTH companies;

(c) whether it is in violation of the TRAI's pricing formula; and

(d) if so, what action TRAI is planning to take against the pay channel broadcasters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. The rate of bouquets and a-la-carte rates of pay channels offered by broadcasters to the DTH operators are not to exceed 50 per cent of the rates at which these bouquets/channels are being offered by them for non-CAS cable distribution.

(b) and (c) In compliance of the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable Services) Interconnection Regulation, 2004 as amended, all pay channels broadcasters have filed their Reference Interconnect Offers (RIOs) with the TRAI. As per these RIOs filed by the broadcasters, all broadcasters except M/s ESPN Software India Pvt. Ltd. are offering their bouquets/channels at fifty per cent of the rates at which these bouquets/channels are being offered by them for non-CAS cable distribution.

(d) TRAI had issued a Direction on 24th June, 2008 directing M/s ESPN Software India Pvt. Ltd., to offer the DTH operators the bouquets/channels at fifty per cent of the rates at which such bouquets/channels are being offered for non-CAS cable distribution.

As M/s ESPN Software India Pvt. Ltd. did not comply with the Direction dated 24th June, 2008, TRAI recommended to the Government to consider taking the following actions against M/s ESPN Software India Pvt. Ltd.:

(a) initiating action for revoking the registration of the channels under uplinking/downlinking guidelines;

(b) suspending, with immediate effect, the registration of the said channels of M/s ESPN Software India Pvt. Ltd., pending action as contemplated in sub-paragraph (a) above by giving them advance notice in terms of clause 6.2.1 of the Downlinking Guidelines; and